

NOTES ON THE STUMBLES FAMILY

Samuel Stumbles was born on 20 August 1816 at Stoke Damerel in Plymouth, Devonshire and was baptised in the How Street Dissenters' Chapel in Plymouth. He was the fourth of five children of William Stumbles the Younger and Catherine Withecombe (nee Wetherall) who had married at Stoke Damerel on 6 February 1809. The other children were William (b. 18.10.1811), Catherine (16.10.1813), Ann (14.7.1814) and Dorcas (27.11.1818).

Catherine Wetherall was born at Devonport in Plymouth in 1780 and was the widow of one Richard Withecombe whom she had married at Stoke Damerel on 1 July 1797. She died in Fore Street, Totnes, Devonshire on 17 March 1862 aged 82. Nothing is known of her forebears.

The ancestors of William Stumbles the Younger had lived for many centuries in various parishes in the south-east of the county. He was born at Salcombe in the parish of Marlborough and was baptised in November 1787. A sister, Dorcas, was born in 1792. Their parents, William Stumbles the Elder and Amy Cumming, had married in the parish on 5 September 1785. The family moved to Stoke Damerel in the mid-1790s. It was a very small place before construction of the Devonport

Dockyard at Hamoaze in its south-west corner and during the Napoleonic Wars (1793-1815) the population increased to some 15,000, mostly sailors, dockmen, traders and their families. Both Williams were tailors. William the Younger died on 19 August 1956 aged 68 at 51 Exeter Street in Plymouth from which address he had run his business for many years.

Samuel Stumbles pursued the family profession of tailoring and lived at 47 Exeter Street in Plymouth. On 29 July 1839, aged 22, he married Amelia Harris, the daughter of John Harris, at the How Street Chapel. On 29 June 1840 their only child was born, Samuel Harris Stumbles.

On 23 July 1840 the Stumbles applied for a free passage to the new colony of South Australia and on 30 August they left Plymouth on the "Brightman", a barque of 380 tons. The Indents describe the family as Samuel (23), Amelia (23) and Samuel junior (3 months), all of 36 Clarence Street, Plymouth.

The boat carried 169 emigrants, 56 casks of bottled beer, 60 boxes of soap, 85 barrels of pork, 246 deals, 100 cans of oil, 8 packages of glass tubes, 80 hogsheads of beer, 3 puncheons of run, 8 casks of four and 650 packages of emigrants' luggage.

The "Brightman" anchored in Holdfast Bay off Glenelg on 10 December 1840 after a voyage of 103 days. It was seven days before the passengers and their possessions were conveyed to the shore where they spent a night in rough huts. The next day (18 December) they travelled by bullock dray about eight miles through the bush to Adelaide which had been settled for only four years.

Five days later Samuel junior died in Rundle Street and Amelia also died during the next eighteen months for Samuel, having moved to Sydney, was described as a widower when he married Mary Daley, aged 21, at St. James' Church in King Street on 6 June 1842.

Mary Daley was born in the town of Galway, Ireland in 1821 and arrived as a bounty migrant at Port Jackson on 7 September 1841 on the "China", a boat of 658 tons. She had left Plymouth on 21 May 1841 and the voyage of 110 days was made without a stop. There was landed 110 adults and 155 children which included her sister Bridget (16), her brother Robert (24), his wife Catherine (24) and their son Patrick who was born 14 days out of Sydney. All were Roman Catholics and the two sisters were "under protection of brother Robert Daley". Mary was described as a housemaid, able to read, and the daughter of Robert and Elizabeth Daley, both deceased.

On 30 June 1843 Samuel purchased a property of 12½ perches, part of the Bishopsgate Estate in Franklyn Road in Glebe. It cost £24.15.0 and he sold it on 28 October 1846 for £125.

In 1848, Samuel decided to return to Adelaide with his wife and two children. They left Sydney on 14 January 1848 on the "Emma", a barque of 121 tons, and arrived at Adelaide on 25 January. There were six other passengers, 153 logs of cedar and a great assortment of household merchandise.

After eighteen months, they decided to return to Sydney and left Adelaide on the "Lady Clarke", a barque of 430 tons, on 10 August 1849. They were now five and were accompanied by 21 others and a great quantity of beer and spirits from London and arrived back at Port Jackson on 5 September 1849. They S.M.H. had this account:

"The 'Lady Clarke' has had a tedious passage of twenty-three days (in fact, twenty seven) from Adelaide. She was compelled, in consequence of adverse winds, to round the island of Van Dieman's Land, and on making land again, was about one hundred and thirty miles to the northward of Sydney."

In newspaper intelligence of the four arrivals and departures, the name appears as Humbles, Strumbles, Slumbles and Stumble, showing the difficulty of deciphering an unusual name written by hand.

The Adelaide experience is confirmed in the records of the Baptist Church in Bathurst Street. On 12 January 1848, the Revd John Ham wrote Samuel a letter of commendation as "Divine providence appears to have directed his removal from this Colony" and a minute on 23 September 1849 stated "Bro. Stumbles from Adelaide to be mentioned". In the same records, Samuel first appears as a pew-holder in the quarter ending 31 March 1842 and last at a meeting held on 18 June 1852.

On their return Samuel bought a property of 9 perches (28' x 80') in Francis Street, Woolloomooloo, part of the Riley Estate for £84 and worked from there as a tailor.

Mary bore four children:

1. Samuel b. 26.1.1845 at Glebe
 m. Clara Caroline Duncan (1850-1.6.1916) on 30.11.1875 in Pitt Street
 d. 26.1.1919 at Stanmore.
2. Mercy b. 12.2.1847 at Woolloomooloo
 m. John Elias Buckland (26.5.1842-5.10.1916) on 25.10.1865 at Wollongong
 d. 13.8.1928 at Wollongong.
3. Catherine b. March 1849 in Adelaide, S.A.
 d. 26.12.1849 at Woolloomooloo.
4. Mary b. 21.10.1850 at Woolloomooloo
 d. 23.4.1851 in George Street, Sydney

She died suddenly in Francis Street on Christmas Day 1850 aged 29. Only two months later, on 3 March 1851 (coincidentally, the 21st anniversary of the marriage of Matthew and Puah Parsons), Samuel married for the third time, again at St. James Church. His bride, Annie Byrnes, the writer's great-great grandmother, was born in Belfast in Northern Ireland in 1829 and arrived in N.S.W. in about 1846.

On 9 January 1851, Samuel sold the property at Woolloomooloo for £174 and soon after moved to Wollongong where he was one of six people who established the Congregational Church there on 2 August 1854. On 26 August 1856 he bought a property of three quarters of an acre (495' x 66') for £85 at Garden Hill near Wollongong on the main line of road leading to Dapto. He sold the same on 4 August 1862 for £150.

On 16 December 1854, while living at Garden Hill, he purchased for £65 a parcel of one rood, four perches of the Smith Estate in Harbour Street and some time later he acquired another property at Fairy Meadow which he named 'Hope Field'.

By Annie, he increased the number of his offspring to ten:

1. Annie Matilda b. 2.5.1852 at Wollongong
 m. Henry Stumbles (2.5.1846-9.7.1925) on 25.1.1871 at

- Fairy Meadow
- d. 2.2.1878 at Wollongong.
2. Leland Howard b. 16.8.1854 at Wollongong
m. Sarah Cooper (?-10.5.1948) in 1880 at Uralla
d. 2.7.1924 at Glen Innes.
3. Dorcas b. 1.3.1857 at Wollongong
m. Henry Parsons (4.2.1849-2.6.1933) on 24.12.1873 at Fairy Meadow
d. 25.6.1928 at Wollongong.
4. William Westlake b. 1860 at Wollongong
m. Sarah Jane Hill (1857-26.6.1937) in 1881 at Bathurst
d. 21.9.1942 at Wollongong.
5. Amelia Frances b. 4.9.1861 at Wollongong
m. 1) Walter Leveridge (1857-20.11.1894) on 17.6.1879 at Wollongong
2.) William James Taylor (1863-?) on 29.10.1899
d. ?

Samuel died on 20 July 1889 aged 72 at his home at 20 Harbour Street from the effects of 'general debility and paralysis of years standing'. His Estate was sworn under 356. Annie died at the same address on 28 April 1902 at the age of 73. Both rest in the Congregational section of the Wollongong Cemetery in graves whose inscriptions simply give their names and dates of death. Samuel had at least 53 grandchildren, Annie 37.

Their eldest daughter, Dorcas (named after her aunt and great aunt and, less directly, after a woman brought back to life by St. Peter's prayer) married Henry Parsons (see May 1985 Bulletin).

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